

**Written Testimony Supporting  
Proposed House Bill 7285, An Act Concerning Complaints That Allege Misconduct By  
Law Enforcement Agency Personnel**

Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Elaine Sisson and I am a resident of the town of Southington, CT. I am writing to offer my support for Proposed House Bill 7285, a bill to help ensure that the provisions of section 7-294bb of the Connecticut general statutes are met in every town and city in Connecticut. This statute deals with the acceptance, processing and the investigation of complaints from the general public regarding alleged misconduct by law enforcement personnel.

When I moved to Southington, CT 16 years ago I was pleasantly surprised by the attitude of police personnel toward teenagers in town. Their positive attitude and their support of youth in the town was refreshing and much appreciated. The members of the department are very involved in all aspects of town life and are seen as important members of a supportive community. You can imagine how surprised I was when I read the Connecticut ACLU report and found that my town was almost completely non-compliant with the law. One or two bad officers could ruin the work of countless officers in making the department one that its citizens can be proud of. Without the implementation of strong public complaint policies, it can be difficult for the department to grow as the community grows and changes.

I realize that lack of manpower, expertise and money is probably partially responsible for the noncompliance of many departments in Connecticut. However, it is important that the state takes stronger measures to ensure that public complaints are handled within the current statute. HB 7285 proposes the following:

- 1) establish meaningful penalties for law enforcement agencies that do not comply with state complaint acceptance and investigation laws,
- 2) create a standardized complaint form that is compliant with best practices and translated into all commonly-spoken languages in Connecticut, and
- 3) require law enforcement agencies to track complaint data and to annually report specific complaint information to the Connecticut Office of Policy and Management.

I would also recommend that the state establish support to help smaller and understaffed departments comply with the law.

Establishing a transparent, accessible police complaint process is necessary for both citizens and for departments that want to serve their communities in a meaningful way.

I urge the members of this committee to amend and support Proposed House Bill 7285.

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